



REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES FIRE SERVICE IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA

Our Nation is faced with the most catastrophic natural disaster in modern times, and we are calling upon the Nation's fire service to aid the affected citizens and communities. This is the United States Fire Administration's initial request to mobilize members of the fire service within Federal guidelines.

The current need is for 1,000 two-person teams. A department may offer more than one two-person team. These people will be deployed as a team, and we prefer that they know one another prior to deployment.

This initial request is for full-time career firefighters that are employed by municipal government and sponsored by that municipality because of the way that salaries and expenses will be reimbursed. We will include the volunteer fire service in the next phase. They must be:

- Physically capable of performing manual tasks under severe conditions;
- Experienced in working with minimum supervision;
- Capable of living in austere, severe living conditions with minimal or no creature comforts for a period of at least 30 days;
- Free of medical condition(s) that would prevent them from working in these conditions for this period of time; and,
- Able to work within the ICS, provide basic first aid, and follow orders.

The work we are recruiting Fire Service members for is community relations-focused, consisting of direct humanitarian outreach to persons in *multi-state areas* affected by Hurricane Katrina. **It is non-operational in nature.** You will assist victims in applying for Federal disaster assistance, distribute information, provide minimal first aid (if required), and take reports. The work may be outside (exposed to the elements and require significant walking) or inside an evacuation shelter/center or disaster field office.

FEMA will notify the Chief of Department, and selected applicants will be notified by their Chief of Department that they have been selected. **NO ONE SHOULD DEPLOY WITHOUT NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE FROM FEMA.** Selected applicants will report to a central location in the Atlanta, Georgia area for training and further deployment. Travel to the Atlanta, Georgia area will be per government authorization in a manner specified upon acceptance. Acceptance information will also cover lodging and other related expense reimbursement information.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process is the exact same process as applying for a National Fire Academy resident course. Applicants will complete FEMA Form 75-5A (short form) general application which can be found at:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/about/attend/nfa-abt1c.shtm>

In box 12a. "Course Code and Title" the applicant should enter "COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPLOYMENT" and "L282". In Box #21, please fill in the names of BOTH team members. No other course information is required on the application, but everything else must be completed. This is the form that will be used for reimbursement to the department or jurisdiction. Additional salary / personnel information will be required upon acceptance. The application must be fully completed and signed by the Chief of the Department or the Chief's designee. The application should be faxed to 301-447-1234. A scanned completed/signed application can be emailed to: firehire@dhs.gov

The department must submit two applications (one team). Single individual applications will not be accepted.

We will notify the first 1000 teams of their acceptance and process any additional applications in the event that they are needed in the future.

Submission of an application **DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE TEAM HAS BEEN ACCEPTED**. Acceptance is a second, separate process. **The Chief of the Department or designee will be notified of the teams' acceptance, and provided deployment information.**

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call 301-447-7250.

INFORMATION FOR THE CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT

Your signature on the application represents your approval of the activity and deployment of the applicant team, as well as confirmation of the following:

- The suitability of the applicants to perform the duties listed under the severe conditions listed above;
- They have passed your department's employment background check;
- They are familiar with and have demonstrated ability to work within the Incident Command System;
- They are capable of providing basic first aid and following orders.

The concept is that your team will be able to work independently under tough conditions, being provided only food, water and perhaps rustic shelter.

FEMA will reimburse the department or jurisdiction as necessary for the salary of each team. It is the responsibility of each team member to retain and submit receipts for other mission related expenses.

Submitting an application does not mean that the person is accepted. Acceptance is a separate process. Do not allow anyone from your department to deploy without official follow-up confirmation. That confirmation will provide specific detailed information.

If one member of the team drops out, then the other member of the team will either not deploy or be sent back home.

The Chief of Department will be notified of the teams' acceptance and provided the deployment information. Please include your email address next to your signature.

INFORMATION FOR THE TEAM BEING DEPLOYED

Do not self-deploy. If you are accepted, you will be given specific further directions from your Chief of Department.

Each team should bring a basic medical jump kit (bandages, BP set) to provide minimal first aid.

You will be provided government ID in the Atlanta, Georgia area.

You will be deployed with another member of your organization as a team and will be working with that person for the duration.

Following are items which you must bring with you:

- sleeping bag;
- personal hygiene necessities;
- medications;
- insect repellent;
- sun screen;
- rain gear;
- flashlight and batteries; and
- personal bank account information including routing number, account number and a voided personal check. (This information is needed for electronic funds transfer form for reimbursement.)

Only FEMA/USFA Community Relations team members **authorized for deployment** are allowed access to the Community Relations Reception Center at 1900 Sullivan Way in College Park, GA. Please do not bring other personnel with you when reporting as they will not be allowed inside or to accompany you on your assignments. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this policy.

We cannot guarantee that you will have a vehicle or a means to transport or store gear.

FEMA will provide you with FEMA shirts. Remember that you may have to carry with you everything that you bring for the entire time.

Finally, please ensure that members of your family can function without your presence for at least 30 days.

Community Relations

Criteria for Community Relations (CR) Work

- In good health
- Ability to walk for long periods of time
- Ability to communicate and listen well with others
- Patience
- Adaptability to sudden changes in work environments
- Ability to be in the sun for long periods of time
- Have a supply of your medications
- Ability to work in stressful and adverse conditions
- Ability to work well with others
- Ability to articulate the spoken language

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Clothing and Protective Equipment (Field)
- Heat Stress Recognition
 - Heat Cramps
 - Heat Exhaustion
 - Dehydrated Exhaustion
 - Heat Stroke
- Suspected Hazardous Materials
 - Hazard Labeling System
 - Label Requirements
- Power Line Hazards
- Environmental Hazards

INTRODUCTION

Community Relations (CR) team personnel will be exposed to many hazards during the initial hours following the arrival at a disaster scene. The local jurisdiction and State will be focusing on saving lives and many public safety issues will not be immediately addressed. The CR Team Leader has the primary responsibility to ensure that good safety practices are maintained throughout the operation. Each team member must also recognize and practice safety procedures to ensure their individual as well as the Team's welfare.

CLOTHING AND PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Wear hat.
- Wear boots with slip-resistant soles – recommend steel toes/shank boot.
- Use gloves to protect hands.
- Wear multi-pocketed vest.
- Use insect repellent when exposed to insect-occupied environment.
- Use Sun-screen
- Use eye protection when in dusty environments.

HEAT STRESS RECOGNITION

Please pace yourself and hydrate as often as possible. Seek cool places, but be cautious of trees with limbs hanging down, etc. Seek medical help if any of these symptoms persist or occur. Heat stress disorders are divided into four categories. They are:

- **Heat Cramps** — caused by failure to replace salt lost in sweating.
 - Symptoms are painful muscle cramps.
 - Treat by drinking lightly salted water or lemonade, tomato juice, or athletic drinks.
- **Heat Exhaustion** — caused by failure to replace water and salt lost in sweating.
 - Symptoms are weakness, unstable gait or extreme fatigue; wet, clammy skin; headache; nausea, collapse.
 - Treat by drinking lightly salted fluids and rest in a shaded area.
- **Dehydrated Exhaustion** — caused by failure to replace water losses over several days.
 - Symptoms are weight loss and excessive fatigue.
 - Treat by increasing fluid intake and provide rest until body weight is restored.

- **Heat Stroke** — caused by total collapse of the body's temperature regulating mechanisms.
 - Symptoms are hot, often dry skin; high body temperature (106° F or higher); mental confusion, delirium, loss of consciousness, convulsions.
 - Treat by cooling the victim immediately, either by immersing in cold water or soaking clothing with cold water and fanning to promote cooling. Continue until temperature drops below 102° F. Treat for shock once temperature is lowered.

SUSPECTED HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Hazardous materials are being encountered with increasing frequency in disaster situations. Hazardous materials may be industrial or agricultural chemicals, explosive substances, military ordnance, drug labs, etc.

- Since many responders to disasters are neither trained nor equipped to identify and deal with hazardous materials, your primary responsibility is to prevent yourself and others from being adversely affected or injured.
- If you encounter what you suspect may be hazardous materials, generally:
 - Stay upwind, uphill, and avoid breathing vapors.
 - Isolate the area.
 - Warn others in the immediate vicinity.
 - If you do not have specific technical expertise to properly respond to the situation, report it to the experts. Do not get personally involved.

POWER LINE HAZARDS

Many types of disaster events result in downed or drooping power lines. Even deactivated transmission and distribution lines may continue to hold charges. When around downed or drooping power lines:

- DON'T drive under power lines with long radio antennas.
- DON'T fuel vehicles under power lines.
- DON'T go near or move downed power lines.
- DON'T approach power lines when standing water is present.

If a power line falls on your vehicle, DON'T leave vehicle. If for some other life-threatening reason you must leave the vehicle, jump clear, DON'T hang on, keep feet together and bunny hop away.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Be aware of other hazards in the environment –

- animals (wild and domestic)
- snakes
- fire ants
- hanging tree limbs
- debris hanging from trees and buildings
- contaminated water

Other concerns to be cautious of:

- Don't accept food or water from a source that is not reliable (people may offer you items as an extension of gratitude)
- Be careful of closed areas for carbon monoxide poisoning
- Avoid walking thru flood waters both from a hazard perspective but also from a mosquitoes and other vermin
- Avoid unstable building and structures (do not go into any structure/building – even though you may be invited)
- Wash your hands often with anti-bacterial soap, not just hand-sanitizers.

Safety is a matter of common sense. Use it and you will keep yourself and other Team members out of trouble and get the job done safely.

PERSONAL KIT

It is the responsibility of each Team member to maintain their own kit and bring it with them to their designated point of departure upon activation.

Recommendation: The contents of the backpack kit should weigh no more than 60 lbs.

C O N T E N T S

Sufficient cash
Personal clothing (field, appropriate for climate/weather at disaster site); extra socks and shoes/boots
Personal hygiene/toiletry items
Extra prescription eyeglasses/sunglasses
Personal medications/vitamins
Inoculations record (agency specific) – especially tetanus
FEMA photo identification card
Federal government-issued credit card, (for travel-related purchases only)
Stenographer notebook or similar for notetaking
Day pack (brightly colored back pack)
Whistle
Flashlight with batteries (may want to take extra batteries)
Hat – for sun protection as a minimum.
Insect repellent (containing DEET or Picaridin as the best long lasting protection)
Sun screen – preferably with at least SPF 30
Multi-purpose knife (put in check-in luggage)
Rain gear
Bottled Water – water in area may be contaminated
Cell Phone for emergency purposes only (with car charging adapter)
Compass
Emergency Contact Info
Tissue, pocket-size
First aid kit, general purpose
Soap, liquid, anti-bacterial and Hand Sanitizer
Towelettes, w/ cleaning solution
Lip balm with sunscreen protection
Snacks such as nutrition bars, crackers, etc.